

County of Orange Social Services Agency
Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division

Program/Area: CalWORKS/Welfare-To-Work
Title: Housing Support Program
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Approved: Signature on file

PURPOSE The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to CalWORKs (CW) staff on the Housing Support Program (HSP).

- BOOKMARKS**
- [Definitions](#)
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DEFINITIONS

3-Day Pay or Quit Eviction Notice: A legal document that a landlord serves to a tenant who is behind on rent and provides the tenant three (3) days to pay the rental arrears and associated late fees or vacate the residence.

Literally Homeless Housing Status: Families determined to be residing on the street or in their car.

Permanent Housing: Private, unsubsidized housing; subsidized housing; permanent supportive housing; or housing shared with friends or family in a sustainable living situation (one that should not be categorized as “temporary” or “transitional”).

Prevent Eviction Housing Status: Families who have received a 3-day pay-or-quit eviction notice with rental arrears due, within three (3) business days from the HSP referral date.

Rental Arrears: Amount of money owed on unpaid overdue rent.

Transitional Housing: Temporary housing for families experiencing homelessness, with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing is limited, and includes hotels, motels, and shelters.

POLICY

HSP assists CalWORKs families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in securing and/or maintaining permanent housing, through utilization of evidence-based models and approaches. HSP offers financial assistance and wraparound services to support permanent housing retention for eligible families.

Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to:

- Hotel/Motel assistance
- Rental arrears
- Rental assistance
- Move-in costs
- Utilities payments
- Credit Repair
- Furniture

Wraparound services include but are not limited to:

- Case management services
- Housing navigation
- Housing outreach
- Legal services

Eligibility Criteria:

CalWORKs families must meet the following requirements to be referred to HSP:

- Have an active CalWORKs case (including Family Reunification. Refer to Policy 403-A - CalWORKs Family Reunification Program).
- Have a housing status category of either:

- **Literally Homeless** - Families determined to be residing on the street or in their car.

Note: Families who are staying temporarily in a motel or shelter, couch surfing, or staying in a residence, which may not be considered ideal, **will not** be considered literally homeless.

- **Prevent Eviction** - Families who have received a **3-day pay-or-quit** eviction notice with rental arrears due, within three (3) business days from the HSP referral date.

Note: Clients who received eviction notices outside of the three (3) business days will not be eligible to HSP services, even if they have not been evicted yet. Clients who receive an eviction notice with no option to prevent the eviction will also not be

eligible to HSP services. Eviction notices without rental arrears due are not eligible to HSP services.

Please refer to HSP Referral Guide for eligible and ineligible housing status examples.

Note: If a client's housing status does not fall under either housing category, the client is ineligible to HSP services, and the referral will be returned to the worker. Eligibility Workers (EW) should utilize Worker Tool (WT) 57- CalWORKs Housing Resources to evaluate for other available housing resources and refer the client as appropriate.

CONCURRENT HOUSING SERVICES

If a client is receiving other housing services at the time of HSP referral request, including Homeless Assistance (HA), the client's housing services will need to expire before submitting an HSP referral to avoid duplication of services.

Note: An HSP referral can be submitted on the **same day** the client is being evaluated for other services **if** their status at the time of the referral is literally homeless.

For additional information on Temporary, Permanent, or Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance, refer to Policy 100-H2-B Homeless Assistance and Policy 100-H2-C Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance.

Refer to WT 57 - CalWORKs Housing Resources for other available housing resources.

CALWORKS STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Eligibility Workers (EW) have the primary responsibility of initiating and monitoring the HSP process. EWs include CalWORKs Eligibility Technicians and Intake/Continuing Employment & Eligibility Specialists. The contracted service provider may be contacted by other Social Services Agency (SSA) staff, such as Case Managers (CMs) or Senior Social Workers (SSWs) to request updates regarding the families' housing situation and HSP services.

Evaluation:

The EW will evaluate the family for HSP referral eligibility in the following situations:

- CW Approval
- Temporary or Permanent Homeless Assistance Requests
- Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance Requests
- Requests for HSP evaluation received from CMs and SSWs
- Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR)
- Annual Re-Evaluation (RE)
- At any contact with the family where housing needs are identified

If the EW determines a family is eligible for an HSP referral, the EW will offer HSP services to the family and provide the following HSP information:

- HSP is a temporary assistance program designed to assist families seeking permanent housing or with housing retention. The families are expected to pay the total amount of rent to the landlord once the subsidy period ends.
- HSP services are offered by a contracted service provider. Families receiving HSP services are encouraged to:
 - Cooperate with the contracted service provider and provide any requested verifications
 - Participate in case management activities
 - Attend and fully engage in meetings
 - Collaborate in the creation of a plan with the contracted service provider to increase their income to sustain their rent and achieve permanent housing stability
- HSP offers financial assistance and wraparound services to support permanent housing retention:
 - Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to:
 - Hotel/Motel assistance
 - Rental arrears
 - Rental assistance
 - Move-in costs
 - Utilities payments
 - Credit Repair
 - Furniture
 - Wraparound services include, but are not limited to:
 - Case management services
 - Housing navigation
 - Housing outreach
 - Legal services

Financial Assistance Limits:

Financial assistance is only provided when an HSP referral is approved. HSP services can be terminated at any time due to unavailability of HSP funds.

The following limitations apply to financial assistance:

- **Hotel/Motel Assistance** has a maximum lifetime limit and is determined by the Operations and Policy Team (OPT) based on available HSP funds. Once exhausted, the hotel/motel services will no longer be available to the HSP case. The contracted service provider will track all hotel/motel issuances and evaluate all Literally Homeless referrals received. If the contracted service provider determines that the hotel/motel assistance has been exhausted, the HSP referral will be denied.

Note: Hotel/Motel payments are made directly to a hotel/motel by the contracted service provider.

- **Rental Assistance** has a maximum lifetime limit and is determined by OPT based on available HSP funds. The contracted service provider will track all rental assistance received and evaluate all Prevent Eviction referrals received. If the contracted service provider determines that the rental assistance has been exhausted, the HSP referral will be denied.

Note: Rental arrears do not count towards the maximum rental assistance.

Referral:

If a family meets the eligibility criteria and accepts HSP services, EWs will:

- Complete and submit the CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951.

Note: HSP referrals are not to be initiated through CalSAWS as that functionality is not available. Eligibility Workers must also not enter or revise entries in the Housing Support page.

- Literally Homeless referrals must request hotel/motel assistance in order to be forwarded to the contracted service provider. If the client declines hotel/motel assistance when assessed, the HSP referral will be denied as the client is identified to have resolved their housing issue.
- For Prevent Eviction referrals, if the client is determined to have met the terms of their eviction notice when assessed, the HSP referral will be denied as the client is identified to have resolved their housing issue.
- Refer to the HSP Referral Guide on how to complete an HSP referral.
- Image the completed HSP referral form into Hyland Perceptive Experience (HPE).
- Update Journal entries in CalSAWS to capture:
 - Date the referral is submitted
 - Client's current housing status:
 - For Literally Homeless, where the family is residing (e.g., street or car) and what city they are currently residing in
 - For Prevent Eviction, the date of the eviction notice
 - Reason for the HSP referral
 - Any other pertinent details regarding the client's situation

Journal Entry Examples:

- An HSP referral has been submitted on 7/02/2024. The family is currently homeless and sleeping in their car, parked within the city of Anaheim.
- An HSP referral has been submitted on 8/06/2024. The family has

received a 3-day pay or quit eviction notice dated 8/5/2024 to pay or exit the premises by 8/08/2024.

OPT will screen all HSP referrals received within 1-2 business days of referral receipt and review HSP eligibility. Referrals meeting HSP eligibility criteria will be forwarded to the contracted service provider for assessment. OPT will return any referrals determined to be invalid, and the explanation of the invalid reason will be provided. EW **must** update the client when a referral is returned.

Invalid reasons can include, but are not limited to:

- Existing active or pending HSP referral
- CalWORKs case is inactive
- Housing status does not meet HSP eligibility criteria:
 - Does not meet definition of Literally Homeless or Prevent Eviction. Refer to HSP eligibility criteria listed in the [Policy](#) section above.
- Duplication of housing services

Note: Staff should not contact the contracted service provider regarding inquiries related to the HSP referral process (i.e. screening, invalid referrals). Inquiries should instead be sent to the HSP inbox.

Once notified by the HSP contracted service provider, the EW will be responsible to update the client with the HSP referral status and disposition.

Communication:

EWs will communicate updates via email and/or phone call with the assigned contracted service provider within three (3) business days. Updates include but not limited to:

- Families' contact information
- Families' housing situation
- EW changes
- CW case status
- Other information that may impact housing services

The contracted service provider may ask case-related questions or request benefit verification letters from the EW. The EW must answer case-related inquiries and/or provide verification to the contracted service provider within one (1) business day. Late responses can result in delayed services to the client.

Note: No additional Release of Information from the client is required.

EWs will also collaborate with the contracted service provider to determine if HSP services are no longer needed.

When communicating with the contracted service provider, staff must cc the HSP inbox. EWs must enter a CalSAWS Journal entry to document all communication with the contracted service provider.

**CONTRACTED
SERVICE PROVIDER
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Receipt of Referral

- Once the contracted service provider receives an HSP referral, they will:
 - Assign the referral within two (2) business days.
 - Contact the family to schedule an assessment
 - Contact the EW for updated family contact information after three (3) unsuccessful contact attempts

Assessment:

- Determine families' eligibility to HSP services and assess the families' current housing needs.

Disposition:

- Provide a disposition (approval or denial) of a referral using CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951, to the referring EW, within 30 business days from the date the HSP referral was received.

Approval:

HSP services to be provided by the contracted service provider may include, but are not limited to:

- Housing Identification:
 - Assist the family in placement in temporary housing, if needed, and refer family to potential housing options.
 - Recruit landlords with units in the communities and neighborhoods where families want to live and negotiate with landlords to help families access housing.
- Rent and Move-in Assistance:
 - Financial assistance necessary for families to transition out of homelessness and/or to stabilize in permanent housing includes, but is not limited to paying for:
 - Applications
 - Security deposits
 - Move-in expenses
 - Permanent housing assistance
 - Utilities
- Case Management Services
 - Evaluate the families' housing needs and barriers
 - Support families in addressing issues that may impede:
 - Accessing housing
 - Obtaining and/or maintaining permanent housing

- Housing stability
- Connecting families to services and supports

Termination of HSP Services:

- Prior to terminating services, collaborate with referring EW to determine if services are no longer needed.
- Notify the EW when services have been terminated and provide a date and reason for termination of services.

Note: The OPT HSP designee will communicate to the HSP contracted provider to terminate HSP services when the CalWORKs program discontinues.

For further information on HSP, please refer to Housing Support Program (HSP) Questions & Answers.

FAMILY SUPPORT ASSESSMENT

The Family Support Assessment (FSA) utilizes a holistic, supportive approach to assist families identify areas of need, overcome barriers, and promote self-sufficiency. The FSA process includes assessing the family's needs and engaging families in the Family Support Team meetings.

The EW and/or HSP contracted service provider can request a FST meeting for the family when a housing need is identified to assess the family's barriers and determine additional services and/or needs. If a FST meeting is scheduled, the contracted service provider is required to attend and participate.

Refer to Policy 408 Family Support Assessment for additional information on the FSA process.

REFERENCES

- AB 135 (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021)
- ACWDL December 13, 2021
- ACWDL July 19, 2021
- ACWDL May 13, 2021
- ACWDL August 2, 2018
- ACWDL May 26, 2016
- ACL No19-114
- Policy 100-H2-B Homeless Assistance
- Policy 100-H2-C Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance
- Policy 403-A-CalWORKs Family Reunification Program
- Policy 408 Family Support Assessment

ATTACHMENTS

- CalWORKs Housing Support Program Referral F063-30-951
- CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP) Questions & Answers

- WT 57 - CalWORKs Housing Resources
- Housing Support Program Referral Guide